

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05

PC-01 /073 W

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R 111142Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1497

INFO AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

AMEMBASSY RANGOON

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI

AMCONSUL UDORN

DIA WASHDC

USSAG NAKHON PHANOM THAI

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 4032

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, TH

SUBJECT: STATUS OF GOVERNMENT FORMATION

REF: BANGKOK 3868

SUMMARY: KHUKRIT PRAMOT HAS AGREED TO FORM A COALITION GOVERNMENT ON CONDITION THAT HE HAVE THE RIGHT TO APPROVE THE CABINET LIST AND THE POLICY STATEMENT. IF PLANS PROCEED SMOOTHLY, THE HOUSE WILL CHOOSE KHUKRIT MARCH 13, AFTER WHICH HOUSE SPEAKER PRASIT KANCHANAWAT WILL SUBMIT KHUKRIT'S NAME TO THE KING FOR OFFICIAL APPOINTMENT. IF KHUKRIT REFUSES TO ACCEPT SEVERAL SOCIAL JUSTICE
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PARTY (SJP) NOMINEES, THE CONSERVATIVES MAY TRY TO FORM A

COALITION WITHOUT THE SOCIAL ACTION PARTY (SAP).

THE DEMOCRAT PARTY IS LIKELY TO VOTE AGAINST A KHUKRIT GOVERNMENT, BUT A CONSERVATIVE/SAP COALITION SHOULD HAVE ENOUGH SUPPORT TO WIN A CONFIDENCE VOTE. END SUMMARY

1. SAP LEADER KHUKRIT PRAMOT HAS ACCEPTED AN INVITATION FROM THE CONSERVATIVE PARTIES TO FORM A COALITION GOVERNMENT IF HE APPROVES THE POLICY STATEMENT AND THE LIST OF CABINET MEMBERS. LEADERS OF THE SAP, SJP, THAI NATION, SOCIAL NATIONALIST AND SEVERAL MINOR PARTIES MET MARCH 10 AND AGREED THAT EACH WOULD SUBMIT HIS CABINET NOMINATIONS TO KHUKRIT BY MARCH 11. KHUKRIT STRESSED THAT ABILITY RATHER THAN PARTY QUOTAS MUST DOMINATE CABINET SELECTION. KHUKRIT SAID HE EXPECTED 146 MP'S TO VOTE FOR HIS GOVERNMENT.

2. HOUSE SPEAKER PRASIT WILL CALL A SPECIAL SESSION MARCH 13 TO CHOOSE A PRIME MINISTER. IF KHUKRIT GETS THE VOTE, PRASIT MAY SEEK AN AUDIENCE WITH THE KING IMMEDIATELY AFTERWARDS TO PRESENT KHUKRIT'S NAME. THE KHUKRIT CABINET WILL NOT ASK THE KING FOR HIS FORMAL INVESTITURE UNTIL AFTER IT RECEIVES A VOTE OF CONFIDENCE (PROBABLY NEXT WEEK).

3. DEPUTY HOUSE SPEAKER PRAMUAN KUNLAMAT (SJP) TOLD AN EMBASSY POLITICAL ASSISTANT MARCH 11 THAT DESPITE KHUKRIT'S BRAVE PRECONDITIONS, HE WILL HAVE TO ACCEPT THE CONSERVATIVE PARTIES' VIEWS ON THE CABINET COMPOSITION. PRAMUAN ADDED THAT A HITCH MAY DEVELOP IF KHUKRIT BALKS AT THREE SJP NOMINEES, INCLUDING PARTY LEADER THAWIT KLINPRATHUM. A SAP MP TOLD AN EMBASSY POLITICAL ASSISTANT MARCH 10 THAT SOME SAP MP'S OBJECT TO TWO OTHER SJP NOMINEES--SUCHIN CHAOWISIT AND CHARUN WATTANAKON--BECAUSE OF THEIR DUBIOUS REPUTATIONS AND CLOSE ASSOCIATIONS WITH THE OUSTED THANOM-PRAPHAT-NARONG TRIO. IF KHUKRIT DOES NOT ACCEPT THE CONSERVATIVE PARTIES' NOMINEES, PRAMUAN SAID THE SJP AND THAI NATION PART WILL TRY TO FORM A COALITION WITH THE SOCIAL AGRARIAN PARTY (*). PRAMUAN ALSO SAID THAT 12 SOCIALIST PARTY (SPT) MP'S HAVE AGREED TO SUPPORT THE CONSERVATIVES IN FORMING A GOVERNMENT.

4. DEMOCRAT PARTY WHIP PHANTHIPHA WATCHAROBN TOLD EMBASSY
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OFFICERS ON MARCH 11 THAT SHE IS CONFIDENT ALL DEMOCRAT MP'S WILL VOTE NO CONFIDENCE IN A CONSERVATIVE COALITION GOVERNMENT UNDER KHUKRIT (BUT DID NOT DISCUSS THE PRIOR VOTE TO CHOOSE KHUKRIT AS PM). SHE ALSO SAID KHUKRIT ASKED HIS BROTHER SENI ON MARCH 10 TO JOIN THE COALITION, BUT SENI DECLINED. IF THE KHUKRIT GOVERNMENT FAILS TO WIN A VOTE OF CONFIDENCE, PHANTHIPHA SAID PRIME MINISTER SENI COULD EITHER DISSOLVE PARLIAMENT AND CALL NEW ELECTIONS OR, AS SHE PREFERENCES, ATTEMPT TO FORM ANOTHER COALITION

GOVERNMENT--POSSIBLY INCLUDING THE SOCIAL JUSTICE PARTY.
(COMMENT: SENI'S RIGHT TO CALL FOR NEW ELECTIONS DOES NOT ENJOY
UNIVERSAL AGREEMENT SINCE HE NEVER RECEIVED AN INITIAL VOTE OF
CONFIDENCE.) PHANTHIPHA ALSO DENIED NEWS REPORTS THAT SIX
DEMOCRATS HAD VOTED AGAINST THE SENI GOVERNMENT MARCH 6. AS
PARTY WHIP SHE PERSONALLY INSPECTED ALL DEMOCRAT BALLOTS IN
ACCORDANCE WITH A PRIOR AGREEMENT. ONLY ONE DEMOCRAT MP,
THONGDI ITSARACHIWIN, VOTED AGAINST THE SENI GOVERNMENT.

5. COMMENT: IF KHUKRIT AGREES TO STAND FOR SELECTION AS
PRIME MINISTER ON MARCH 13, AND RECEIVES THE NECESSARY
MAJORITY, CABINET FORMATION AND THE POLICY STATEMENT SHOULD PROCEED
APACE THEREAFTER. IF KHUKRIT AND THE CONSERVATIVES CANNOT GET
TOGETHER, AND KHUKRIT DECLINES PARLIAMENTARY SELECTION AS PRIME
MINISTER, IT MAY BE SOME TIME YET BEFORE ANYONE CAN FORM A
GOVERNMENT WHICH ENJOYS MAJORITY SUPPORT IN THE HOUSE.
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